

Reviresco

by arian

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Summary: Sequel to Thoughts and Memories. Figure out what the title means, then you can guess what it's about. Maybe.

## 1. Default Chapter Title

><br> Reviresco.

> By Arian.<br>

><br> Author's note: OK, it's probably best if you read "Thoughts and Memories"

> first because this is a sequel to it and if you haven't read T&M you won't<br> understand a lot of this. I will warn you now, there are spoilers. I'd also

> better warn you that this is a very contrived plot line and just a lame<br> excuse for Arian to further her Laguna obsession. Um. Also some of the

> characters are a bit out of character. And Squall is even more of a git<br> than usual.

><br> Not a lot else I can say, except, please ignore the inconsistencies with

> T&M and enjoy the story!<br>

><br>

> She sat beneath a tree, some distance from the other figure on the hill.<br> She knew that he would not want to see her, so she kept far enough away

> that he'd never know she was there, but close enough to hear the story he<br> told.

><br> She watched as he finished the tale and fell asleep. /Why am I here?/ She

> thought. Why now? I don't want to be like this./

><br> She had become conscious a short time ago. The first thing her eyes had

> rested upon was a young man walking down the hillside, talking to a girl<br> at his side. She couldn't see their faces and they had not seen her. She

> had thought nothing more of it until now. Until hearing that story.

Now<br> she knew who they were.  
><br> /I want to go back to how I was. I want to rest. I'm so tired.  
Bone-weary./  
> She smiled at the irony of it. But I don't have bones anymore. Not  
when I'm  
> like this.  
><br> While she had been thinking, a dark-haired young lady had  
approached the  
> sleeping figure on the hillside and woken him.<br>  
> Ellone? Is that really Ellone? She's so grown up! So old! But her  
face is  
> still the same. Still the same round face she had before.  
><br> She edged a little closer as they walked away and she caught  
Laguna's last  
> words, on the edge of her hearing.<br>  
> "Sleep well, Raine."<br>  
> I was until recently./ She thought sadly. /I wish I knew what had  
woken me  
> up. I wish this had never happened. Her eyes fell on the beautiful  
white  
> flower Rinoa had made for her and Raine understood.<br>  
> \*\*\*\*\*<br>  
> Squall sat in his room, feebly trying to work while Rinoa talked to  
him.<br> It wasn't that he didn't like her company, but sometimes he  
wished she  
> could appreciate the value of silence.<br>  
> To his relief, Rinoa was interrupted by a knock on the door, and  
when he<br> opened it he found Quistis, Irvine, Selphie and Zell, all  
pale faced.  
><br> /What's the matter with them? I don't think there was a party  
last night.  
> If there was Rinoa would've made me go. Quistis never drinks  
anyway, so it<br> can't be a hangover./  
><br> Squall invited them in and they lodged themselves around the  
room.  
><br> /Something must be wrong. Selphie hasn't said a word yet, and  
Zell isn't  
> shadow boxing. It must be really serious. Great, another problem,  
just what <br> I need. Why can't they all leave me alone?/  
><br> After considerable nudging and whispered comments from the  
others, Quistis  
> handed Squall a note and he noticed a slight tremor in her  
hand.<br>  
> "This came for you this morning."<br>  
> He opened the folded sheet of paper, expecting to find a  
declaration of<br> war or something worse, but when he read it, he  
laughed.  
><br> "This is it?"  
><br> "What does it say?" Rinoa peered over his shoulder and read the  
letter  
> out loud.<br>  
><br>  
><br> Squall,  
> Go back to Winhill. Bring Rinoa.<br> R.  
><br>  
> He stared at the cryptic message for a while. <br>  
> "So why are you guys so nervy? And who's "R"?" he asked and Quistis  
looked<br> at him in surprise.  
><br> "You don't know many people from Winhill, and there is one  
who's name

> begins with R who kind of springs to mind."<br>  
> "Raine?" Rinoa asked. "You think she wrote this? That's impossible."<br>  
> Raine's dead. We watched her die two weeks ago when we all stood round a  
> screen in Esthar. She has been dead for 17 years and I don't believe in<br> ghosts./  
><br> "You think this is ghost written and that's why all of you are out of  
> sorts."<br>  
> Selphie handed him a white flower.<br>  
> "This came with it. It's the same as the one's that were in Raine's bar<br> when we went to Winhill."  
><br> "Anyone could've sent this." Squall said flatly. "And how come you all  
> read my mail before I do?"<br>  
> "I had to open it to see who it was for." Selphie shrugged. "And I just<br> kind of saw the rest of the writing. Then I told Irvine about it."  
><br> "Irvine told me." Zell put in.  
><br> "And then they all came knocking on my door." Quistis finished.

><br> Squall rolled his eyes. /Great! One long game of Chinese whispers. What  
> did I do to deserve this? It must've been terrible.  
><br> He started to tell them his letters were private and shouldn't go around  
> the whole of Garden before they got to him, when he felt himself moving<br> towards the door.  
><br> "Rinoa, what are you doing?"  
><br> "We're going to Winhill."  
><br> "Because of this? It's just a joke or something. Ghosts do not exist."  
><br> "Then think of this as a way to prove that theory." She said, quickly  
> dragging him out the door before he had time to think of a reply.<br>  
> \*\*\*\*\*<br>  
> "Rinoa, what the hell are we really doing here? If you avoid it again,<br> I'll take you back to the Sorceress Memorial and let them vacuum-pack you."  
> Squall threatened as they walked away from the Ragnarok towards Winhill.<br>  
> "You wouldn't do that. If you remember, you/ were the one who objected to  
> it before." She replied tartly.<br>  
> "Rinoa!" he yelled in frustration. She sighed.<br>  
> "Look, I just... have a feeling about this, OK? Call it intuition, if it<br> makes you happy."  
><br> Squall rolled his eyes and walked on to the tiny village.  
>/Great, she  
> chooses today to be all sorceress-y and mysterious. Why me?

><br> He started to head to the bar, but Rinoa took his arm and dragged him  
> away.<br>  
> "If she's here, you won't find her in there." She said, in answer to his<br> questioning look.  
><br> "How do /you/ know?"  
><br> "I have... an idea. A... theory about this, but I'm not sure,

so I don't  
> want to say anything. Just take my word for it, Raine will be on that hill,<br> where we went last time we visited."  
><br> Squall was now completely confused, but followed Rinoa past the buildings  
> and up to the hilltop.<br>  
> A figure sat curled up next to the plaque that bore Squall's mother's<br> name. She lifted her head as they approached and climbed to her feet.  
> Squall stopped in his tracks when he realised he could see the clouds in<br> the sky behind her. He blinked vaguely a few times, trying to make his eyes  
> work properly, but the figure remained transparent.<br>  
> He turned to Rinoa who was staring straight ahead and he caught a trace<br> of sadness, and worry, in her eyes.  
><br> "Go and talk to her, Squall." She breathed quietly, still staring at the  
> dark-haired woman in front of her. "Talk to the mother you've never met."<br> He nodded faintly, but found his feet refused to move. /I'm Squall  
> Leonhart. I defeated Ultemecia, Adel and more monsters than I care to<br> count. I am not going to be petrified by a ghost. Especially not one that  
> is my mother...  
><br> With a supreme effort of will, he forced himself forwards until he stood in  
> front of her.<br>  
> It was undoubtedly Raine Loire that waited patiently before him. The same<br> dark hair and blue eyes he remembered from the Ellone-induced dreams, and  
> from the incident in Esthar recently, when he had watched her die while<br> standing in another room with 17 years between them.

><br> /What can I say? What do I say to her? I never knew her. Never had the  
> chance. Now I have that chance and I don't have a clue what to do. Do I<br> tell her I wish things could've been different? That's lame. She must know  
> that already.  
><br> While Squall was still trying to formulate something intelligent to say,  
> Raine looked at him carefully, then spoke.<br>  
> "You're confused, I'm sorry. You don't know what to say, do you? You can<br> relax a little about that. You can't say anything that would offend me. You  
> must have questions you want to ask me. I don't mind." Raine's eyes<br> flickered away from Squall as Rinoa came forward to stand at his side.  
><br> "Julia?" Raine whispered. "I know you aren't her but..."

><br> "You knew my mother?" Rinoa asked quickly.  
><br> "She was your mother?" Raine gave a short laugh. "Yes, that explains the  
> likeness. I knew of her. I... saw a picture of her once."<br>  
> "You said it's OK to ask questions, Raine... Mu -" Squall queried<br> awkwardly.  
><br> "It's OK. You just call me Raine, like Elle does. I didn't call you up  
> here to make you feel awkward." She said softly.<br>  
> "That's what I wanted to ask. Why are we up here and why did you

send that<br> letter?" Squall frowned. "And /how/... you're..."

><br> "Can we talk about why in a minute? As for how I sent the letter..." Raine

> shrugged. "I got one of the villagers to post it."<br>

> "They know you're here?" <br>

> "No. They didn't remember. They didn't even know what they were doing." She<br> replied sadly.

><br> "Was it you we saw when we came to Winhill a while ago?" Rinoa put in, a

> strangely intense look on her face.<br>

> "No." Squall felt something, an understanding, pass between the two women<br> and he watched as Rinoa walked away a short distance and sat on the grass.

><br> "What's the matter with her?" he asked, looking with wide eyes at his

> mother. "I don't understand."<br>

> Raine reached out a hand, unable to help herself, but Squall drew back<br> before she could touch his face.

><br> "I'm sorry." She sighed. "I shouldn't have done that. But you just looked

> so much like him/. And I... ahh, my son, I'm confused too."

><br> "Why didn't you call Laguna? He'd love to see you again. He'd do anything

> you asked."<br>

> Raine looked at her son carefully. <br>

> "He wouldn't." She said, after a while. "You think about it, and you'll<br> realise that he just couldn't see me again. Not like this." She beckoned to

> Squall and they walked over to Rinoa.<br>

> "You asked why, well, this is your answer. I... awoke?... a short time ago.<br> The first thing I saw was you two walking away. A few days later, Laguna

> and Elle turned up. Laguna recited what must have pretty much been your<br> life story, Squall, and then they left, without ever seeing me. I made sure

> of that. The main point is that I don't want to be like this. This isn't<br> for me. I'm no tragic figure to wander like this. Tragic is not what I want

> to be and it's not something I've ever been good at. I want to "rest in<br> peace" or whatever. Help me." She finished, smiling as she drew in a breath

> she didn't need. Yes, there was a lot about this existence that amused her.<br>

> "I don't have much else I can tell you, except that I can't leave this<br> hilltop." She sighed in frustration.

><br> "Why did you... wake up?" Squall asked.

><br> "I don't know... I have an idea now, though. Rinoa can explain it better

> than me." She cast a glance to the girl, still sat with her head in her<br> arms. After a moment, the mass of dark hair lifted and Squall saw that she

> had been crying.<br>

> "I'm so sorry. So very sorry. I didn't know... I shouldn't... Oh I'm<br> sorry."

><br> "Rinoa, what's wrong? Whatever you've done, we can fix it." He knelt

> beside her.<br>

> Rinoa's horrified eyes looked up at him. "The rose, Squall. The rose I<br> made. It woke Raine up. I don't know how exactly but

somehow everything I  
> was thinking all got mixed up."<br>  
> "It doesn't matter. It's just a flower, right? We can crush it or  
burn or<br> something, can't we?" He asked, knowing the answer was  
not going to be that  
> simple.<br>  
> "I made it eternal, remember?" She shook her head fiercely. "I  
shouldn't<br> have done anything! Sorcery is not to be messed around  
with!"  
><br> "You were trying to help me. You meant well." He tried to  
console her,  
> knowing how awful he was at that kind of thing. "Let's get back to  
the<br> Ragnarok. We'll decide what to do from there."  
><br> Rinoa nodded and wiped her eyes. Raine, who had been watching  
them  
> silently, spoke up. "I can't leave here."<br>  
> "You can. I'm sure if we take the flower, then you can come, too.  
It must<br> be the flower you're..." Rinoa struggled for a word,  
"Connected to."  
><br> Raine nodded acceptance, and Rinoa walked to the plaque and  
picked up the  
> perfect rose she had created.<br>  
> \*\*\*\*\*<br>  
> "How did you know it should be white?" Raine asked after staring at  
the<br> flower, where it sat on the tabletop.  
><br> "It just seemed... right. To tell the truth, I didn't think  
about it much  
> while I made it. I just had a picture in my mind and I made it  
real." Rinoa<br> shook her head. "I don't know how it works, but Edea  
will be able to help  
> us."<br>  
> She looked out of the windows at the clouds racing past as they  
tore<br> through the sky. They were headed to the old orphanage, to  
see Edea. She  
> lived with Cid in Garden now, but after a quick phone call  
("Matron... We've<br> got a bit of a problem..."), she had agreed to  
meet them elsewhere. Squall  
> did not want to inflict the bustling atmosphere of Garden on Raine,  
or<br> perhaps he didn't want to inflict Raine's presence on Garden.  
He still  
> wasn't comfortable with her.<br>  
> "I don't understand a lot of things. Why did Squall grow up in  
an<br> orphanage? And Elle? Laguna left a lot out in the story he  
told me."  
><br> Rinoa hesitated and opened her mouth to speak, but Raine shook  
her head  
> and sighed.<br>  
> "No. It doesn't matter anymore. I just say it so that you know  
how<br> confused I get, every so often. This is like standing in the  
middle of a  
> play, having to make up your lines without knowing what the people  
before<br> you have said. But then, a lot of life is like that." She  
laughed. "Death  
> too, it would seem. But no, I have no curiosity anymore. I don't  
need the<br> answers I once craved." She smiled impishly at Rinoa for  
a moment.  
><br> "I saw a picture of Julia, once. Wanna hear about it?"  
><br> "Sure." Rinoa shrugged, curious about a story that involved her  
own mother,  
> however briefly, and intrigued by the way the small woman in front

of her<br> leapt from subject to subject.

><br> "You know some of the story, that Laguna managed to throw himself off a

> cliff and recovered in Winhill? Well, he was getting really edgy about<br> something that he'd had with him when we brought him in. Me, being the

> curious wretch that I am, despite everything he said, fished around while<br> he was out and I found a picture of Julia. You wouldn't believe how mad I

> got at myself for being jealous." She chuckled to herself. "I can't believe<br> I was so dumb!"

><br> Rinoa smiled. "What did Laguna say, when he found out?"

><br> "Oh, he never did. I was too stubborn to say a word about it. Always was

> too stubborn for my own good. But I did ask him about Julia. About why he<br> hadn't gone back to see her."

><br> "Tell me about it."

><br> "You really want to hear? I'm not boring you yet?"

><br> Rinoa shook her head. "No, I like talking /and/ listening but I only get to

> do the talking part around Squall. If I listened, well..."<br>

> "He isn't very talkative, is he? What was I talking about? Oh... I<br> remember. Asking Laguna about Julia. He was really mad at me after I did

> that. Well, not mad. I don't think he's ever been mad at anyone, but he was<br> definitely upset."

><br> "Why? Didn't he think you'd ask, sooner or later?"

><br> "No, it wasn't that. It was my timing. He'd just asked me to marry him."

><br> Raine chuckled again and Rinoa burst out laughing.

><br> "I could see Squall doing something similar. If I asked him something

> important, he'd probably ask for the card rules for the area, or if it was<br> me or Selphie that had Leviathan junctioned! Something work related anyway.

> What happened next?" Rinoa asked, returning to the story.<br>

> "Laguna, the poor love, didn't know what to do and tried to avoid<br> answering the question." She sighed. "It was a stupid question anyway. I

> didn't need an answer, not really. It never mattered. But stubborn, curious,<br> delusional little Raine wanted answers to everything under the sun, and she

> got her answer eventually." She closed her eyes in pain and Rinoa reached<br> hesitantly across the table.

><br> "Raine? Are you alright?"

><br> Raine's eye's snapped open before Rinoa's hand reached her own.

><br> "No. You can't. I can touch people... but not objects, and people cannot

> touch me."<br>

> "I don't want you to be upset." Rinoa held her hand out, offering it to<br> Raine, palm up.

><br> "No, Rinoa. If you knew what it felt like... Just believe me, it's enough

> to give you nightmares."<br>

> "How do you know all this?" The girl asked.<br>

> "It's innate. It's to do with what I am." She shook her head in<br> despair. "It's pulling me apart. My personality isn't even all here. Not

> all at once. It's as if everything that I am is a mist and I can

only<br> snatch at so many parts of me at a time. Never all of me at once."  
><br> "Well, that explains the mood swings." Rinoa smiled. "Don't worry. We'll  
> help you."<br>  
> \*\*\*\*\*<br>  
> Squall landed the Ragnarok and sat thinking for a moment. He was still<br> very unsure about his situation. Raine undoubtedly existed in some form - he  
> didn't have a problem with that - but it seemed that she didn't want to. He<br> finally got to meet his mother and she didn't want to stay with him.  
><br> /Maybe she hates me./ Squall thought, gloomily. /I wouldn't blame her if  
> she did.  
><br> He shook his head, quickly trying to banish that feeling of self-pity. He  
> knew that she loved him, it just hurt that despite that she wouldn't stay.<br>  
> She won't remain here for me, but perhaps there are others she will stay  
> for. The line of thought was painful, but he allowed it to continue.  
> Laguna and Sis. If she won't stay for them then nothing can make her stay.  
> We have to get to Esthar -  
><br> "Squall!" What /are/ you doing? Edea's waiting for us!" Rinoa yelled up  
> from below.<br>  
> "Whatever..." he muttered, stirring himself. I'm fed up with knowing  
> Raine in snatches from other people's memories. I want to know her myself./  
> I have to make sure that I get that chance.  
><br>

## 2. Default Chapter Title

><br> Reviresco  
> By Arian<br> Part2  
><br>  
><br>  
> They walked to the derelict building that Squall and his friends had grown<br> up in and as he watched Raine, Squall realised that she wasn't exactly  
> transparent, as he'd first thought. He could see everything behind her<br> quite clearly but if he concentrated, she grew a little more substantial.  
> It was as if she was flickering, faster than he could see, and somehow both<br> the image of her and the image of what he would normally see registered in  
> his mind, superimposing on each other.<br>  
> Edea stood, waiting, in the ruins of her orphanage. She smiled serenely<br> as they approached, but no surprise registered on her features.  
><br> /Nothing has ever been able to startle Matron./ Squall reflected.  
><br> "Matron, this is Raine, my mother." He didn't give any further



explanation

> of Raine's identity. It wasn't necessary. His life story had circulated  
> Garden and, to his disgust, he found that most of the students knew more

> about him than he himself knew.<br>

> Edea simply nodded and turned her eyes to Raine.<br>

> "You understand what has happened? And you want us to try to destroy the  
> flower? I will do what I can to help, but I can't guarantee that this will

> work. It may be that the flower is truly eternal and nothing we do will  
> make a difference, or we may succeed and there is no change to your state.

> Do you still want us to try?"<br>

> "Yes. Whatever happens is better than this." Raine answered without  
> hesitation. "Thank you, for looking after Squall and Ellone and for all

> you did for them."<br>

> "You know that is not necessary." Edea chided gently.<br>

> Raine nodded. "It seems wrong not to say it, though."<br>

> "Matron." Squall interrupted, anxious to put his plan into motion. "I  
> think I have an idea, about how to help Raine. Surely Esthar would have

> the technology to help."<br>

> Rinoa stared at him and a little of the colour drained from her face.<br>

> "What are you playing at?" She muttered under her breath.<br>

> "I'm not playing/ at anything. Esthar really is the best place to go."

> Squall wondered just how Rinoa always managed to see right through him.<br>

> "Perhaps, Squall." Edea thought for a moment. "But there are some things  
> we need to know first. Rinoa, I really need to know what was running

> through your mind when you cast the spell. Our best hope is that you missed  
> something and we can use that flaw to our advantage."

><br> Rinoa frowned slightly. "I was just thinking about Squall and Raine."

><br> "Did you make a mental list? Of things that you wanted to protect the

> flower from?"<br>

> "No. I don't remember doing that."<br>

> "Do we have to try everything/, then?" Raine asked in dismay.

><br> "Only the eight elements, and sheer physical force. If they don't work it

> starts to get complicated." Edea smiled ruefully. "We can't do this here  
> though. It will take time and this place is in ruins. We'll also have to be

> careful about where we go and who we involve in this. We don't want to  
> cause trouble by parading a genuine ghost - sorry Raine - across a couple

> of continents. I think the best place we can go is Esthar."<br>

> Squall cheered in the silence of his mind. Thank you, Matron! That's

> exactly what I wanted!

><br> "I really don't think that's such a good idea..." Rinoa muttered, looking

> warily at Raine.<br>

> "Why?" Raine asked, confused.<br>

> "Laguna and Ellone are there."<br>  
> "Oh." Raine stood silently for a while, then she looked up. "Well,  
they<br> don't /have/ to see me, if they don't want to. They don't  
even have to  
> know."<br>  
> Dammit! She's ruining my plan!/ "Esthar, then?" he said, out loud.

><br> Edea nodded. "It's best. Dr. Odine is there if we need any  
assistance."  
><br> Squall ran through his plan silently, as the four of them  
walked the short  
> distance to the Ragnarok. She'll be in Esthar, that's the main  
thing. I'll  
> work out the rest once we get there. Sis and Laguna won't let her  
go, and<br> once she sees them, she won't want to leave./  
><br> \*\*\*\*\*  
><br> "We'll stay with Laguna." Squall said as they sat on board the  
Ragnarok  
> some time later. He ignored Rinoa's glare. "That palace or whatever  
is big<br> enough."  
><br> "Staying there would give us good access to Dr. Odine." Edea  
approved.  
><br> /Not to mention good access to Sis and Laguna./ Squall thought.

><br> "Palace?" Raine asked, frowning.  
><br> "Laguna's the president of Esthar now." Rinoa stopped glaring  
at Squall  
> long enough to answer.<br>  
> For a moment, Squall thought his mother was going to burst out  
laughing,<br> but her blue eyes widened briefly and she settled for a  
look of amused  
> wonder instead.<br>  
> "...Unexpected." She said at last.<br>  
> "A bloody miracle might be a more accurate way of putting it."  
Squall<br> muttered.  
><br> "Why is it so surprising?"  
><br> He stared at Raine, not quite believing the question, thinking  
carefully  
> of an answer that wouldn't hurt her.<br>  
> "Well, he's not exactly a genius, for a start."<br>  
> "Does it take a genius to run a country?"<br>  
> Obviously not./ Squall snickered in the depths of his mind, but  
Raine  
> continued, oblivious to his comment.<br>  
> "Clever men have never done Galbadia any good, I know that. I think  
he'll<br> do well." Her eyes shone as she spoke. "He has... I don't  
know. There  
> isn't a word for it. A sparkle? Something like that. An  
indefinable<br> quality that draws people to him. You have it too,  
Squall. You might push  
> people away, but no matter what you do, they stand by you."<br>  
> "Garden looks up to you." Rinoa agreed.<br>  
> You think I don't know that? That's why I work so hard. To try and  
make  
> sure I don't fail all these responsibilities people keep piling on  
me.  
><br> "Whatever." He answered, smiling to take the indifference out  
of the  
> expression.<br>  
> \*\*\*\*\*<br>

> Squall waited impatiently in a small room in the lower levels of the  
> Presidential Palace. There had been no question of entry being denied and  
> Rinoa had used sorcery to whisk Raine inside without being noticed.  
> "Finally!" He breathed as Kiros and Ward entered the room.  
> "Hello, Squall. What - " Kiros stopped suddenly and the colour drained  
> from his face as Ward tapped his shoulder and pointed to the far corner of  
> the room.  
> "Raine?" The strangled whisper escaped from Kiros and he crossed the  
> short distance towards her. "What...?" he shook his head, lost for words.  
> "Explain. Please?"  
> Edea told the story while Ward and Kiros continued to stare at Raine, eyes  
> wide.  
> "I don't want Laguna to know. I don't want to hurt him." Raine added.  
> "We can arrange for you to have this floor to yourselves for a while. As  
> long as you all stay here, you won't run into anyone. Odine is around  
> somewhere, if you need to speak with him." Kiros looked to Ward for  
> confirmation. "We won't tell Laguna. Not if you don't want us to."  
> "Thank you."  
> Squall watched as they walked out, and then turned to Edea.  
> "Matron, what do we do now?"  
> "What we came here to do. We have to try to find a way to unmake this  
> rose."  
> "I can't stay here. I can't... I'm going for a walk. I'm sorry." He  
> glanced quickly over to Raine and walked to the door.  
> I can't sit in there, watching them try to send her away. I don't want  
> her to go! I have to get her to change her mind.  
> He headed to the top of the building, despite what had been said about  
> staying on the lower level, and opened the door to the presidential office.  
> Laguna was lounging in his chair, legs stretched out on the desk.  
> "Hi, Squall." He grinned at his son.   
> Does he ever actually /do/ anything? Every time I walk in here, he's just  
> passing the time. Squall wondered, idly.  
> "I need you to help me with something."  
> "Sure." Laguna paused. "Why so serious?"  
> Squall hesitated for a moment. /Is this right? Should I do this? I don't  
> want to lose my mother again! That thought screamed in his mind, overriding  
> any doubts.  
> "I want you to go and talk to Raine."  
> "What are you talking about?" Squall heard the faint edge of panic in  
> Laguna's voice.  
> "She's here. Downstairs. She's... I don't know, a ghost, or something."  
> Squall the Tactful, that's what I should be called. I hate saying stuff

> like this, I always get it wrong! And this is a wonderful example of me<br> getting it wrong./  
><br> "Oh no... no, she can't be." Laguna paced back and forth, shaking his  
> head in disbelief. "No. I don't believe you. It's some kind of bad joke,<br> isn't it?"  
><br> "No. I wouldn't joke about something like this. Besides, I'm the  
> workaholic SeeD, remember? We don't joke. Especially not like this."<br>  
> "The dead are at peace. They don't... They can't walk." He muttered to<br> himself. "I don't like what that... No."  
><br> Squall finally lost his temper.  
><br> "Well, you don't have to believe me! Come and see for yourself! That's  
> why I came up here. I want you to talk to Raine. She doesn't want to be the<br> way she is. She wants us to send her back to wherever she was. You can't  
> let her leave again!"<br>  
> "She's dead. And even if she were here, I wouldn't see her. I wouldn't<br> ever ask her to stay, either."  
><br> "For once in your life, stop behaving like a child! Don't let her go.  
> Please." Squall was completely confused. Why was he so willing to let her<br> slip back into nothing? What was wrong with him?  
><br> "No. I can't do that, Squall. Grow up and think about it from someone's  
> point of view other than your own." Laguna turned his back, and Squall<br> stormed out, making his way back to the lower levels of the building.  
><br> \*\*\*\*\*  
><br> Rinoa turned from the flower as the door was flung open, thinking that  
> Squall had returned. The figure that entered was familiar, but it wasn't<br> Squall who stood there. It was Ellone.  
><br> "I got the story out of Kiros. Is it really true?" She asked quickly.  
><br> "Yes." Raine stepped forwards and elation shone in Ellone's eyes.  
><br> "I hoped so much. I didn't dare believe it."  
><br> "Don't get your hopes up, Elle. I'm not staying." Raine warned softly.  
><br> "I know. But you're here now, and there's so much I want to tell you!"  
><br> Raine turned to back Rinoa. "Do you mind if we take a break? So I can talk  
> to Elle for a while?"<br>  
> "No problem. None of the GF's worked anyway, so I need to talk to Edea."<br> Rinoa shrugged and left them to talk.  
><br> \*\*\*\*\*  
><br> Squall walked quickly back to the room, lost in his own thoughts. Just as  
> he was about to open the door, Ellone walked out.<br>  
> "Sis! Great! I wanted to speak to you. You've already seen Raine?"<br>  
> "Yes!" Ellone breathed. "I'll do anything I can to help."<br>  
> Squall got a sudden foreboding that things weren't going his way. "What<br> are you talking about?"  
><br> "If you need me to do anything to help Raine, you only need to ask." She

> explained. "You could say that I owe her."<br>  
> Squall groaned. "Sis!"<br>  
> "What?" she asked, unaware of what he'd wanted her to say.<br>  
> Squall was about to say something else when an idea struck him. No, wait,  
> I can use this.  
><br> "I've had this idea about how to help Raine." He lied. "I really need  
> Laguna to come and speak to her first, though. The problem is that he<br> doesn't want to."  
><br> "He /what?/"  
><br> "Could you help?" Squall asked, wide eyes feigning innocence.  
  
><br> "Don't worry, Squall. I'll get him down here." Elle promised, trusting  
> Squall's judgement that Laguna's presence was a necessity.<br>  
> "No need to tell him about the idea, or anything. Just get him to talk to<br> her." /That should be enough. It has to be./  
><br> \*\*\*\*\*  
><br> Raine sat alone, watching her white flower with a pensive expression on  
> her face. They would have to find something that worked soon, she knew<br> that Squall was up to something. She could read it in his face. He didn't  
> want her to go, Raine knew that, but she did not want to stay. She couldn't.<br> It was so difficult for her to concentrate on what they were saying, on  
> everything that went on around her. She was so tired and only wanted<br> oblivion, but it seemed that was too much to ask.  
><br> She pitied Squall. He couldn't change her mind, no matter what he did,  
> but he had inherited her stubbornness and would keep trying.<br>  
  
> He's going to hurt people if he keeps doing this./ She realised suddenly.  
> I won't stop him though. Maybe I want him to change my mind. Maybe I want  
> him to make leaving so difficult that I have to stay. Think of that! Being<br> able to stay with him, Elle and Laguna! Wouldn't it be wonderful!/  
><br> /But the pain and hurt of missing all those years is still there and will  
> always be there. I wish it didn't matter, but it does. Just being here<br> hurts more than I can stand./  
><br> /I want to see Laguna! You can't./ She told herself angrily. /You can't  
> hurt him. You cannot do that. Besides, you know that if he asked you to<br> stay, you would. Despite everything you would stay with them if he asked  
> you to... I don't think he'd do that, but is that a risk I can afford to<br> take?/  
><br> "I want to go home." She whispered quietly, puzzling at the words as she  
> said them. <br>  
> Where is home? I don't know anymore./  
><br> She quickly switched to another subject. /Squall and Ellone - How much  
> they've grown! It was hard for her to adjust her images of them from a  
> baby and a hyperactive six year old, to what they had become. It

wasn't so  
bad with Elle, because she looked much the same, but Squall she had only  
> seen once, as a newborn baby, and the only similarity left was his grey  
eyes.  
><br> Not for the first time, she sat and wondered how she could bring herself  
> to leave them now, when the choice was her own.<br>  
> They have lives to live, choices to make and future to live for. If I  
> stay, I'll end up pulling them down into death with me. I would never do  
that deliberately but it would happen. I know it would. There are too many  
> reasons why I can't stay!  
><br> Raine returned her thoughts to her son and amused herself for a while by  
> dissecting his character traits. There were many that were entirely his  
own, but some she recognized.  
><br> /Stubbornness - that's from me, independence - I was never really that  
> independent. I liked to think I was, but I relied on others a little more  
than they knew. Maybe he's like that, too. He certainly gets that "sparkle"  
> from Laguna. And the structure of their faces is so similar!

><br> /Except Laguna smiles.../  
><br> She laughed quietly to herself and waited for Squall and Rinoa to return.  
><br> \*\*\*\*\*  
><br> Ellone walked hurriedly through the corridors, clutching at the  
  
> ever-present green stole that hung from her arms in an attempt to stop it  
from falling to the floor.  
><br> /Squall must have misunderstood. Of course Uncle Laguna will want to talk  
> to Raine. Or maybe it was Laguna who didn't understand Squall. Squall has  
never been terribly good at expressing himself. Once Laguna understands,  
> he'll be as happy as I am!  
><br> Ellone had only recently been able to forgive herself for the part she  
> had played in Raine's death and although she knew Raine would never have  
blamed her for causing Laguna to leave Winhill, for years she had blamed  
> herself. Now, to be able to talk to Raine and say she was sorry, just to  
be able to see her, even if it was only for a short time, was more than  
> Ellone had hoped for. Raine had to leave, Ellone could accept that, even  
if she couldn't understand it.  
><br> She pushed open the door to the office and stepped over to Laguna where  
> he stood gazing out of the window. He did that a lot, she noticed. Almost  
as if he couldn't believe what he saw, despite having seen it nearly  
> everyday for years. It was a fantastical city, she had to admit, almost  
beyond belief.  
><br> "Hey, Elle." He said as he noticed her approach.  
><br> Ellone's mind suddenly reverted to how it had been the last time her  
> family had been together and she ran the rest of the distance.<br>

> "Raine's here!" she gasped, excited. She tugged gently at Laguna's hand,<br> as if she were once again the tiny, bubbly girl he had met in Winhill.

><br> He looked bemusedly at Elle for a moment, wondering at her sudden change

> in demeanour. Then her words sank in.<br>

> "You've been talking to Squall?"<br>

> Ellone nodded and tugged at his hand again. "Come and see her!"<br>

> "No, Elle. I'm sorry, but I can't do that." He shook his head.<br>

> Ellone's mood abruptly faded and for a brief moment she marvelled at a<br> side of her that she thought had died with Raine.

><br> "Why?" she asked, dropping his hand in confusion. "You love her."

><br> "Yeah. I do." He said, a little wistfully. "But I can't see her like that.

> I can't handle it. All this time it's been a small comfort that... Ah I<br> don't know." Laguna shrugged. "That wherever she was, she was happy. She

> was at peace, or whatever." He smiled sadly for a moment. "If she wasn't,<br> she'd have made sure I knew about it, wouldn't she?"

><br> "Now it turns out that she's here. What does that mean, Elle? Wasn't she

> happy where she was? It hurts too much for me to think about it."<br>

> "You can't mean that. You have to see her! She'll be gone soon and you<br> won't get another chance!" Elle burst out, suddenly angry at him.

><br> "I've fixed all I needed to fix." He said quietly. "I don't need another

> chance."<br>

> "What about her? She wants to see you!"<br>

> "Did she say that?" Laguna looked up quickly.<br>

> "No, but of course she does. She doesn't have to say it, I can tell."<br> Ellone glared at him, daring him to deny it.

><br> "If... if Raine asks for me... then I'll see her."

><br> "But she won't do that!" Elle shouted in exasperation.

><br> "Look, Elle, whatever I do, it doesn't make any difference. She's still

> dead." The word caught in his throat and he turned away.<br>

> Ellone stared at him in disbelief. "So that's it? Just for an instant my<br> family can be together again and you've decided to spoil it! Do you know

> what that means to me and to Squall, after growing up in an orphanage? Do<br> you have any idea what it was like?"

><br> "We wouldn't be together because Raine isn't alive. Maybe she's here, but

> it's not the same as being together."<br>

> "Come and speak to her!" Ellone insisted desperately, in one last attempt<br> to sway Laguna's mind.

> "Dammit, Elle, I can't/!" he yelled back at her and instantly regretted it

> as the girl's round face scrunched up and she ran from the room.<br>

> \*\*\*\*\*<br>

> Squall strolled into the room with a slightly smug look on his face,<br> convinced Ellone would succeed where he had failed.

><br> "You look pleased with yourself." Raine smiled, looking up as

he entered.

> Squall nodded and was about to reply when Ellone came flying through the<br> doors, tears running down her face.

><br> "I tried, Squall! But it's no good, he won't listen!"

><br> Squall's smug look dissolved into consternation and he swore softly to

> himself. So much for his plan.<br>

> Raine's horrified eyes settled on her son, realising a little of what he<br> had meant to happen. As Squall looked back at her, his eyes caught a glint

> of white.<br>

> "OK, Sis. It doesn't matter." He said calmly. "Why don't you go and dry<br> your eyes."

><br> Ellone nodded and walked out, leaving Squall and Raine alone.

><br> "How close to the flower do you have to stay?" he asked casually.

><br> Realization hit Raine instantly and she watched him pick the rose up.

><br> "Don't do this, Squall. I know you don't understand a lot of what's going

> on here, but for his sake and mine, don't do this."<br>

> "I have to." He said simply and took the flower through the door.<br>

> Raine stood for a moment, hoping that his crazy idea wouldn't work, then<br> she felt a force hit her back and she was pulled after him.

><br> She walked behind Squall, feeling that walking was a little less

> demeaning than being dragged.<br>

> "You can't do this, Squall."<br>

> "Don't you know the first thing teenagers do when you tell them they<br> can't?" he answered blandly.

><br>

### 3. Default Chapter Title

><br> Reviresco.

> By Arian.<br>

> Part 3<br>

> <br>

><br> Laguna sat on his desk with his feet on his chair and rested his head in

> his hands. It had been a long, trying day.<br>

> There was a time I would've welcomed this./ He reminded himself. /I

> would've been grateful for this once.

><br> He wished Squall and Elle would understand, but he knew that the only way

> that would happen was if they experienced this themselves. Better that they<br> never know.

><br> Laguna sighed heavily and smiled. This was all completely beyond him.

> Every time he started to try and make some sense of it, he ended up<br> twisting his mind into knots which he'd then have to spend an hour

> unravelling.<br>

> Still feeling troubled about shouting at Ellone earlier, he decided



to go<br> and look for her, to try and set things right again. He slid down off the  
> desk as the door opened behind him and the voice that rang out made him<br> freeze where he was.  
><br> "Don't turn round!" Raine cried quickly, as soon as Squall ushered her  
> through the doorway.<br>  
> Laguna's fingers sought the edge of the desk and his knuckles went white<br> in an effort to stop his hands from trembling.  
><br> Squall glared at his mother for a moment, before moving to stand in front  
> of Laguna. Chagrin showed on his face when Raine did not move with him.<br>  
> "You can drag me from room to room, Squall, but I do have some/ freedom of  
movement." She told him.<br>  
> "You really/ hate us, don't you?" Laguna asked suddenly, and Squall looked  
> up in shock.<br>  
> "Hate you? No!"<br>  
> "Then why do this?"<br>  
> "He doesn't want me to leave, Laguna." Raine answered, sadly.<br>  
  
> "I'm trying to put things right!" Squall cried out earnestly.  
"Speak to<br> her, dammit!"  
><br> "Don't turn around." Raine warned again. "Well, you can... if you want. I  
> don't mind... it'd be nice if... oh, I don't know, whatever." She rambled,<br> unsure how to even begin to tell him what she thought, or even if she  
> should. <br>  
> "I'm sorry, I just can't. I wish..." his voice trailed off. "Were you<br> happy?" he asked suddenly and Raine smiled.  
><br> "Happy? Not really. There is no happy where I was. But I wasn't unhappy,  
> either."<br>  
> Laguna nodded, satisfied with the answer. Squall just stood and stared at<br> the two of them. This wasn't what he had expected. He had expected tears  
> and smiles and then Raine would stay. He didn't understand their silence.<br>  
> Laguna bowed his head, unwilling to look into his son's eyes, so Squall<br> walked back to Raine.  
><br> "Why?" He asked quietly. "You must have things to say to each other. I  
> don't believe that you haven't. Why don't you say them?"<br>  
> "Are you hoping that if we talk enough, I'll stay?" Raine asked bluntly.<br> "That won't happen."  
><br> "I just wish you'd talk! Properly! Maybe this won't make you stay, but...  
> I don't know..." Squall shook his head angrily.<br>  
> Raine took pity on him. "We don't talk, because it hurts. Every word<br> hurts. Every sentence feels like it's lame and superfluous, and maybe most  
> of them are. Everything we had to say to each other was said, long ago,<br> and if there's anything we missed out, well, it's unnecessary now." She  
> hesitated and reached out to Squall's face. This time he didn't flinch. His<br> eyes widened as she laid her hand across his cheek and she gave a faint

> smile. He felt nothing. Not simply the lack of the feeling of skin on skin,<br> but the complete absence of anything. Even the usual pressure of the air,  
> which everyone is so accustomed to they do not feel its pressure, had<br> vanished.  
><br> "Let's go, Squall." She whispered. "You won't get what you want here."  
> He gave up and started to walk towards the door with Raine, reassuring<br> himself that he'd come up with another idea soon, when she suddenly darted  
> back towards the desk. Laguna still stood with his back turned and made<br> no movement as she began to speak.  
><br> "I love you and I believe in you." She said softly. "And even though it's  
> such a cliché I'm cringing, I'm going to say it anyway. A part of me is<br> always with you, and always has been. I'm stubborn, remember? I don't give  
> up anything that belongs to me easily. I'd better stop now, before the<br> platitudes I'll start pouring out disgust me." She sighed. "Take care of  
> yourself, Laguna." She gave the figure one last look before she turned and<br> walked out, and just before Squall pulled the door closed, he heard a reply.  
><br> "'Bye, Raine."  
><br> Turning to his mother, he saw a luminous pain in her eyes.  
  
><br> "You said it hurt to speak to him. So why did you?" he questioned.  
><br> "Because there are some things that should never go unsaid. Because  
> perhaps he needed to hear that." She grinned at him. "I might be stubborn,<br> but that doesn't mean I can't change my mind sometimes."  
><br> Squall thought about that and they walked in silence for a while.  
><br> "You make a big thing out of being stubborn." He commented and she frowned.  
><br> "Yes, I suppose I do. Perhaps it's because it is one of the few parts of  
> me I'm really sure of. Everything else in my personality seems to drift<br> and change, but that is one of the things that stays with me."  
><br> "What else stays with you?"  
><br> "You should know!" She laughed. "Can't you guess?"  
><br> A slight crease formed in Squall's forehead, his face deadly serious. /He/  
> didn't think it was funny.<br>  
> "Love for Elle and Laguna." He hazarded.<br>  
> "And you!" She chided gently. "Why is it you find it so hard to believe<br> that I love you, too?"  
><br> "It's not that..." He shrugged. "You know them so much better, so  
> obviously you love them much more."<br>  
> "Oh, obviously/." She retorted, rolling her eyes.  
><br> "Please don't do that, you sound like Rinoa."  
><br> "Squall, I don't like talking about loving somebody /more/ than somebody  
> else. That's not the way my mind works. If I love somebody, then that's it.<br> There is no graduation for me. It's a simple yes or no situation. I love

> you all in different ways, but there is no "more than" or "less than". Do<br> you understand?"  
><br> "A little." He grudgingly admitted. He paused, and when he spoke again,  
> there was a trace of fear in his voice. "Do you hate me now?"<br>

> "What? For dragging me up to see him? No. How could I hate you? You<br> /thought/ you were right."

><br> "I'm not giving up." He warned. "I can't let you leave. Even after what

> you've told me. It's not enough. I want you to stay here with me."<br>

> She nodded solemnly. "I know that. But I will go in the end. You do<br> whatever you have to, but you will learn to see things differently before

> this is done."<br>

> They walked back into the small room on the lower level and found Rinoa<br> sat waiting for them.

><br> /Uh oh. She's in a /really/ bad mood. I haven't seen that look on her face

> since I told her she was an amateur, back in Timber.

><br> Squall just had time to deposit the white flower on the table before Rinoa

> stood and pulled him back through the door.<br>

> "We need to talk." She said flatly, pulling him into another room at the<br> end of the corridor.

><br> "What is it?" he asked, playing dumb. She glared at him and he dropped

> that idea.<br>

> "You took her up to Laguna, didn't you?" she accused.<br>

> "And?"<br>

> "And/? What do you mean /And/?" She smacked her forehead with an open

> palm. "Are either of them ever going to speak to you again, or have you<br> managed to make them disown you yet?"

><br> "What are you talking about? Raine's still speaking to me."

><br> "What about Laguna?" she countered.

><br> "I don't know. But he never argues with anyone for long."

Squall answered

> confidently.<br>

> "Well he might decide to start making up for lost time!"<br>

> "Why would he?"<br>

> "Ohhh... I'm going to thump you so/ hard in a minute! I'm beginning to

> wonder if you actually have/ a heart in there, or if it's just a solid lump

> of stone."<br>

> "Whatever... Rinoa, it didn't work anyway. They didn't seem to want to<br> talk. They just stood there. He wouldn't even turn and look at her!" Squall

> sighed. "I don't understand it. If... if it was us in that situation... If<br> you were dead... I'd want to see you. I really would. And I couldn't let

> you go. How can they...?"<br>

> "They are different to us." She said, still smiling at what he had said.<br> "You wouldn't let me go..." she mused to herself. "I wouldn't go anywhere.

> I'd stay whether you liked it or not. How can I explain it to you, Squall?<br> They're both too afraid of hurting each other." Rinoa

paused and gave a  
> short laugh. The sound echoed through Squall's head like silver  
bells and<br> he found he had missed that sound. They had been  
arguing for so long, he  
> hadn't heard her laughter for days.<br>  
> "We're not like that." She continued. "We're selfish, possessive.  
We'd<br> rather be in pain than be without each other, I guess. Loss  
is the greatest  
> hurt for us. But the thing that hurts them the most is the pain of  
the<br> other. Neither of them can stand the other to be in pain. And  
you forced  
> that on them." She drew in a breath. "OK, I'm done."<br>  
> Squall nodded and mulled over what she had said. "That's the<br>  
psycho-analysis from Rinoa over then?"  
><br> "Just think about it, will you? Try to understand what you've  
done. Maybe  
> you didn't do any harm and you've gotten away with it, but at least  
try to<br> understand it. C'mon. Edea spoke to Dr. Odine and they've  
figured out  
> something that might work."<br>  
> "I can't let Raine go. Not without a fight, it's just not in me."  
Squall<br> said gently, not wanting to argue with Rinoa again. "I  
can't listen to your  
> ideas, because I don't want them to work."<br>  
> "You have to. You've hurt Raine enough already. She might need you  
and you<br> have to be around in case she does."  
><br> He acquiesced and they walked silently back.  
><br> \*\*\*\*\*  
><br> "I've talked with Dr. Odine and we've finally agreed on  
something that  
> should work." Edea stood and the others around the table waited  
anxiously<br> for her solution.  
><br> "The flower is entirely made up of sorcery, no part of it  
already existed  
> when it was made. Therefore, the answer is to use something to  
banish the<br> sorcery from the rose, rather than trying to destroy  
the thing itself.  
><br> "At first we thought of one of Odine's products, to seal the  
power the  
> rose contains, but then we found something a little better. The  
Sorceress<br> Memorial is still fully functional and Odine has given  
permission for us to  
> use it to seal the flower." Edea paused. "We don't know for sure if  
it'll<br> work. If it doesn't then I have nothing else left I can  
suggest. We really  
> will have tried everything."<br>  
> The Sorceress Memorial? That sealed Adel up for years. I haven't  
got a  
> chance of it failing with a simple flower! It's not fair!  
><br> Rinoa nudged Squall. "Vanished into his own little world  
again." She  
> commented to Raine, who watched her son for a moment.<br>  
> "No. I don't think that's it. He has his own little conversation  
going on.<br> His own inner monologue, don't you Squall?" Raine  
laughed, recognizing the  
> signs of it. "So you get that from me, too."<br>  
> Squall broke out of his thoughts, disgruntled to find them talking  
about<br> him. /She talks to herself like I do? I never knew that. I  
wonder if she  
> realises that Laguna does it too. Or at least, he did, when Elle

sent me<br> back. There are too many things I don't know about her./

><br> "So /that's/ what's behind those silences of yours!" Rinoa exclaimed. "It

> makes much more sense now!"<br>

> Squall shrugged. He thought she'd already known about it. "Let's go." He<br> said shortly.

><br> \*\*\*\*\*

><br> He followed the others up the stairs, trailing at the back of the group for

> once. Looking up, he saw a crescent moon, Esthar's symbol, over the door<br> and he remembered the last time he had entered the Sorceress Memorial.

><br> He had come here to rescue Rinoa, having been persuaded that it was the

> right thing to do. Until then, he had believed that it was Rinoa's choice<br> and he should respect her decision, but Quistis had made him see that after

> all they had been through together, Rinoa's powers didn't matter. The two<br> of them belonged together, even if they did argue from time to time.

><br> How was Raine's decision any different to Rinoa's? What was to stop him

> from preventing this from happening, just like last time?<br>

> Grit determination filled his face and he caught up with the others as<br> they entered the main chamber of the Memorial.

><br> Squall watched as a technician listened carefully to Edea, then took the

> white flower from her hands and walked around the corner to place it in the<br> peculiar glass globe.

><br> He looked around at the others but Rinoa, Edea and Ellone were watching

> the technician. Raine, however, was watching him with a curious expression<br> on her face. Almost as if she were waiting.

><br> "I can't just stand here." He whispered, half to his mother, half to

> himself. "I have to stop this. I'm sorry."<br>

> It seemed to him then that he caught a glint of understanding in her eyes<br> but she shook her head.

><br> "Let me go, Squall. You don't have to do this." She replied, just loud

> enough for him to hear.<br>

> "I do." He said simply. Walking forwards until he stood in front of the<br> control panel, Squall drew his gunblade. The technicians backed away

> slightly as the artificial light bounced off the blade.<br>

> "This isn't going to happen. I won't let this happen. Not now. Not like<br> this." Squall looked pointedly at the technicians. "Don't touch anything,

> don't push any buttons. I don't want to hurt anybody, but I will, if I<br> have to."

><br> The group didn't move. They didn't get paid enough to stand up to

> knife-wielding maniacs. The most senior of them sighed. He had been here<br> the last time the kid had shown up and he wished the boy would make up his

> mind what side he was on and save them all this hassle.<br>

> "Squall! I thought you were going to think about what we talked about?"<br> Rinoa stepped forwards.

><br> "Sorry." He shrugged, realising he'd just landed himself in the

middle of

> another argument.<br>

> "I can stop you." She said, trying to look her most threatening but only<br> making Squall suppress the urge to snigger.

><br> "I can use sorcery to stop you." She continued desperately, flexing her

> fingers. "Come away from there or I'll make/ you. I will! I really mean

> it!"<br>

> "Then use your sorcery, if that's what you want to do. Can you raise your<br> hand against me?" He was /almost/ sure he knew the answer to that, and he

> hoped he wasn't wrong. He had been on the wrong end of sorcery before and<br> didn't care to repeat the episode.

><br> The young sorceress lifted her hand, fingers stretched outwards, and

> light beginning to collect at her palm.<br>

> "I can't!" she wailed suddenly, scattering the light. "Not against... Ohhh!<br> I hate you! I hate you for making me do this!"

><br> Squall was taken aback. "You hate me?" His eyes widened in horror.

><br> "No!" Rinoa relented immediately "I don't /hate/ you. Well, not much. I

> just... Oh, you annoy me, that's all. You disappoint me. Please step away<br> and let the technicians do their job. Won't you do this for me? Please?"

> She implored, trying a different tack.<br>

> "No." Squall shook his head. "Why aren't you on my side? Why have you<br> been against me all along? You know I hate arguing with you."

><br> "Because you're wrong. You /must/ know that by now. Everyone has told you

> that and given you reasons and still you persist. Why are you so stubborn?"<br>

> "Ask her." Squall shot a glance at Raine, who had walked down to stand<br> with Rinoa. "I know you better than you think, Rinoa. The real reason you

> want Raine to go is because she's a reminder of your mistake. Every time<br> you see her you remember that its /your/ fault she's here and you don't like

> that."<br>

> "Oh, you swine!" Rinoa yelled. "You absolute, cold-hearted - " She<br> stopped suddenly and laughed, a smile crossing her face. Walking forwards,

> she started to speak in a sing-song voice. "You've missed something, Squall.<br> I might not be able to use sorcery against you, but you certainly won't use

> that on me." She gestured to the gunblade.<br>

> Squall shook his head. "No, maybe I can't. But I can use it on them." He<br> lifted the blade to point it at the technicians.

><br> "You wouldn't. I /know/ you wouldn't."

><br> "Perhaps, but do you want to risk it?"

><br> Rinoa stopped where she was and stamped her foot in exasperation. Turning,

> she looked to Edea and Ellone, who had been silently watching the<br> squabbling, to ask if there was anything they could do. Before she could

> speak, the door opened and Laguna stepped through, flanked, as

always, by<br> Kiros and Ward.

><br> "Why does Laguna have this uncanny ability to lead us straight into the

> middle of dangerous situations?" Kiros muttered to Ward, seeing Squall with<br> the gunblade outstretched.

><br> "..."

><br> "Well, yeah, I /know/ we were in the army, but most of the time our little

> skirmishes were unauthorized, probably because we were in the wrong<br> place..." Kiros replied to Ward's unspoken comment.

><br> "Dangerous?" Laguna replied, overhearing the first comment.

"Nah. It's

> just Squall." <br>

> "Well that/ has to be up there in the top 10 most moronic things you've

> ever said." Kiros breathed quietly, knowing that Laguna had spotted Raine<br> and therefore wasn't interested in banter anymore.

><br> "Well?" Raine asked, placing her hands on her hips as he simply stared at

> her.<br>

> "You look the same. You look exactly as I remember. Funny, but I didn't<br> think you would, for some reason."

><br> "You have a bad memory. I'm quite sure I wasn't transparent before." She

> smiled.<br>

> "Well, yeah, there is that." Laguna's grin deteriorated. <br>

> "Why did you change your mind? Why are you here?"<br>

> "I... don't know."<br>

> "Ah, no. You've tried evading questions before and we found out then that<br> you couldn't do it, so give up. I'm the same person and if I decide I

> really want an answer, I'll get one." She laughed almost happily, despite<br> the pain inside.

><br> "I was just kinda sat around and I was thinking. Just about stuff, you

> know." He waited for the comment from Kiros about him actually being able<br> to think and miracles /can/ happen, or something to that effect. When there

> was only silence, he continued on with what he had been saying.

"And I<br> thought about how I couldn't possibly see you, because it hurt. But then

> I thought, well, it hurts if I just sit here and do nothing, so what's the<br> difference? I might as well come and see you because that's what I'd rather

> do. Besides, maybe being here wouldn't hurt as much as I thought it would.<br> Did that make sense?" He raised an eyebrow.

><br> "I think so. In the obscure but strangely logical way your explanations

> usually make sense." Raine paused, tilting her head on one side.

"Does it<br> hurt? As much as you thought?"

><br> "Absolutely kills." He confided with a grin. "I miss you."

><br> "No. Don't start on that. I can't... Just leave it. I know what you want

> to say so let's leave it at that." She warned.<br>

> Laguna nodded, and looked around. Holding up his hand, signalling for<br> Raine to wait a moment, he crossed the floor to Ellone.

><br> "Sorry about earlier, Elle. I didn't mean to yell at you."

><br> Ellone smiled. "You're here now. All is forgiven. It already was, anyway."

><br> Laguna turned back to Raine and shrugged. "Well, what do we do now? You

> want to leave?" <br>

> Raine dipped her head slightly in reply, not quite able to form the words.<br> "She can't." Squall interrupted. "I won't let her."

><br> "He's /still/ trying this?" Laguna asked, surprised. "What did we do wrong?

> I thought he was supposed to be the smart one."<br>

> "We did everything wrong. But he is quite/ smart. He just doesn't know

> what to do." She stepped out of the way, motioning for Laguna to go and<br> talk to Squall.

><br> Squall was distinctly unimpressed. He hated being talked about like he

> wasn't there. <br>

> "What exactly do you plan to do now, Squall? There isn't really a lot<br> left you /can/ do. Oh, and put that away." Laguna pointed to the blade.

><br> "Why?" Squall demanded, glaring at his father.

><br> "Because technically, you being who you are and me being who I am, it's

> Garden declaring war on Esthar. As good as Garden is, I don't think it<br> could quite stand up to Esthar's technology."

><br> "Garden isn't involved. It's just me acting on my own. You /know/ that."

><br> "Yeah, but I might choose to ignore it. As for you acting on your own,

> egotistical just ain't the word if you think you can take out an army,<br> single-handedly." Laguna laughed. "You might be good, Squall, but..."

><br> "You wouldn't do that." Squall answered confidently. "Raine stays. It's

> alright for you. You made your peace with her. We helped you do that." He<br> stopped that line of conversation as Laguna shot him a warning look. Neither

> of them were dumb enough to mention that Laguna hadn't been with Raine when<br> she died, originally. It had been Squall's idea to send him back to be with

> her.<br>

> "You and Sis both had your chances and gained the absolution you needed.<br> You're both happy now. Why can't I have a chance? I never even knew her! I

> want her to stay. I need/ her to stay."

><br> Raine, slightly astonished at that last remark, stepped forwards.

><br> "You don't need me. You've /never/ needed me. Not even when you were small.

> You've always been so self-sufficient and not just because you've had to<br> be. It's a part of you that would always have been there. Perhaps I would

> stay if you were younger, or if you did not have Rinoa with you. I would<br> certainly stay if Laguna or Ellone asked me to, but they won't. They needed

> me but you never have. And you've done so very well on your own! Look at<br> all you've achieved without either of us! Let me go, Squall. Give me that

> one small thing. You don't really need me to be here, and as for



knowing<br> me, you do now. You've been talking to me and listening to my replies for a  
> while. If you don't know me now, you never will." Raine sighed heavily.<br>  
> "Just let me go. It doesn't cost you anything really. Learn to see that."<br>  
> Squall stood stunned at what she had said. He did/ need her, didn't he?  
> He lowered the gunblade in confusion and Rinoa stepped forwards and wrapped<br> her arms round his waist.  
><br> "Stop being selfish. She's right. You've fought and now there's nothing  
> else you can do."<br>  
> "You told me once that I should let go, because nothing I could do would<br> make it real. You should follow your own advice, Squall. This isn't real,  
> either. Forcing Raine to stay isn't going to make it any more real." Laguna<br> put in, pointedly avoiding any reference to just when and why Squall had  
> given him that advice.<br>  
> Squall stood still for a moment, his brown hair flopping down into his<br> eyes. /Am I selfish?/ He thought. /Can I let her go, after all my efforts to  
> make her stay? Was she right, she told me I'd have to let her go, in the<br> end. They're right. I've always known that they were right. I just hoped.../  
><br> He sheathed the blade and turned away in defeat. "I had to try. I couldn't  
> just accept..."<br>  
> "I would have thought less of you if you had." Raine said gently and he<br> turned back to stare at her, realising that he had known that already. He  
> knew her better than he thought. She smiled at him, catching his eye.<br>  
> "Finally," Raine breathed in relief "I can go." <br>  
> "It might not work." Edea cautioned. "Remember what I said."<br>  
  
> "What's it like? Death?" Laguna asked and Squall groaned. Everyone has  
> been carefully side-stepping that question. Trust Laguna to put his foot in<br> it./  
><br> To Squall's surprise, his mother didn't seem to mind.  
><br> "You know everyone says it's like going to sleep? Well it is, only more  
> than you imagine. When you go to sleep, you don't know that you've gone to<br> sleep until you wake up. You don't even know that you /are/ asleep. It's  
> like that. I only know because I'm here. If I was still... well, I would<br> still be blissfully unaware."  
><br> "That sounds... horrible." Laguna shuddered slightly.  
><br> "Yeah, but it isn't. Because you don't know, see?" Raine took a small  
> step forwards and lifted her arms up around his neck.<br>  
> Squall watched Laguna's eyes widen, just as his had done when Raine had<br> touched his cheek. He remembered that strange absence of physical feeling  
> all too well. Laguna simply stood there, not wanting to move because he<br> might go right through her.  
><br> "OK, tell them." Raine whispered.  
><br> Squall turned to Rinoa and folded his arms around her, not

wanting to  
> watch.<br>  
> Laguna nodded to the technicians who had stood, completely  
bewildered, in<br> the corner of the room. Two of them walked  
hesitantly to the control panel  
> and started to tap the buttons. All eyes fixed on the flower where  
it<br> rested in the glass globe, mist beginning to consume it.

><br> \*\*\*\*\*

><br> A ten-year old girl ran through the flowers for the simple  
pleasure of  
> running. Her brown hair flew out behind her, the wind sweeping it  
out of<br> her face, as her legs carried her faster through the  
field, crushing the  
> flowers underfoot.<br>  
> Finally out of breath, she stopped and flopped down into the  
blooms, the<br> stems lifting the flowers high over her head as she  
sank back. Her blue  
> eyes stared through the petals at the sky for a moment as her  
breathing<br> returned to normal.  
><br> She tilted her head to one side and, seeing a flower she had  
stepped on,  
> she frowned. Cupping it carefully between her hands, she inspected  
it,<br> finding it was bruised and damaged beyond repair. She smashed  
it quickly  
> into nothing, unable to see it in such a state. Nothing should  
linger like<br> that, she decided and then she laughed. Well, that  
wouldn't happen to her.  
> Not ever. <br>  
> She stretched her arms up to the sun, reaching out to feel the  
warmth on<br> her bare arms, her childlike mind unable to conceive of  
a time when she  
> didn't exist, or a time when she wouldn't exist. Her time would  
last for<br> eternity, as far as she was concerned. Death and illness  
were yet to touch her  
> young life and she smiled at the thought of them. What were they to  
her? <br>  
> "Forever!" Raine laughed out loud, whimsically. "They'll not take  
me! I'm<br> forever!"  
><br>  
> THE END.<br>  
> <br> Author's note: Apologies for the end, but some people I know  
didn't want  
> Raine to leave at the end, and some people did, so I've left it  
very much<br> open to your own interpretation. I'd be interested to  
hear what you think  
> happened, and if you e-mail me, I'll tell you what I think  
happened. Here's<br> what has become the now obligatory poem:  
><br> Leaving The Rest Unsaid.  
> By Robert Graves.<br>  
> Finis, apparent on an earlier page, with fallen obelisk for  
colophon,<br> Must this be here repeated?  
><br> Death has been ruefully announced  
> And to die once is death enough, be sure, for any life-time.<br>  
  
> Must the book end, as you would end it,<br> With testamentary  
appendices and graveyard indices?  
><br> But no, I will not lay me down  
> To let your tearful music mar the decent mystery of my  
progress.<br>

> So now, my solemn ones, leaving the rest unsaid,<br> Rising in air  
as on a gander's wing  
> At a careless comma,<br>

End  
file.